

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

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AMEMBASSY JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
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WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 7676

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 AND 2
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, UNSC, LE, IS, MARR
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

REF: (A) STATE 154408; (B) STATE 155008; (C) USUN 2534

1. SINCE RECEIVING REF A ON SATURDAY I HAVE BEEN KEEPING
IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH NEWLIN IN JERUSALEM TO TRY THROUGH HIM TO
STAY MORE ABREAST OF UNIFIL'S MOST CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF MILITIA
PROBLEM. MEANWHILE, WAS SEEKING BEST WAY TO MEET WITH WEIZMAN
WITHOUT HAVING CONTACT INTERPRETED AS COLLU-
SION WITH HIM IN FINAL HOURS BEFORE CRUCIAL CABINET SESSION
SUNDAY ON PEACE PROCESS. TRIED TO LOCATE HIM UNSUCCESS-
FULLY SATURDAY EVENING; MEANWHILE; UNIFIL REPORTS VIA NEWLIN WERE
SOMEWHAT MORE ENCOURAGING.

2. FINALLY HAD A BLUNT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH WEIZMAN SUNDAY
MORNING JUST BEFORE HE ENTERED CABINET MEETING. I CAME DOWN

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HARD ON UNACCEPTABLE MILITIA BEHAVIOR, REMINDING HIM POINTEDLY THAT
HE HIMSELF HAD TOLD VIETS IN MARCH THAT ALL THE CHRISTIAN
FORCES IN THE SOUTH WOULD FOLLOW ISRAELI ORDERS. I STRESSED
MILITIA DEPENDENCE ON ISRAELIS FOR EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, AND
MAINTENANCE, SIAD "EVERYONE KNEW" THAT MILITIA UNITS
HAD BEEN TRAINED BY THE IDF, AND HAMMERED ON POINT THAT ISRAEL
WOULD BE BLAMED BY WORLD AT LARGE FOR MILITIA CONSTRAINTS ON

UNIFIL'S FREEDOM OF ACTION. I DID NOT RPT NOT TALK ABOUT WHAT COOPERATIVE LAMBS THE PALESTINIANS ARE BEING VIS-A-VIS UNIFIL; THIS ARGUMENT WITH WEIZMAN(OR OTHER ISRAELIS) ONLY CONFIRMS THEIR WORST SUSPICIONS ABOUT UNIFIL* BUT I LEFT HIM IN NO DOUBT AS TO HOW CONCERNED WE ARE ABOUT MILITIA ACTIVITIES AND THAT WE HOLD ISRAEL ACCOUNTABLE.

3. MADE SIMILAR DEMARCHE TO EVRON LATER IN MORNING. HE HAD JUST SEEN DINIT'S REPORT OF NEWSOM PHONE CALL (REF B). HE ASSURED ME THAT OUR PRESENTATIONS "WERE ON THE DESKS OF BEGIN, DAYAN, AND WEIZMAN."

4. WEIZMAN TELEPHONED ME AT 1600 HOURS SUNDAY, SHORTLY AFTER THE CABINET MEETING ENDED. HE SAID HE HAD TALKED WITH CHIEF OF STAFF EITAN (AND THAT WEIZMAN'S AIDE, COL TEHILA, HAD SPOKEN TWICE WITH THE IDF COMMANDER OF THE NORTHERN REGION. IN TYPICAL WEIZMAN VERBAL SHORTHAND, HE SAID "EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL. HADDAD WILL CONTROL THE MILITIAS." I QUESTIONED HIS ASSURANCE, POINTING OUT THAT BY HIS OWN ADMISSION ISRAEL CONTROLLED THE MILITIA'S SUPPLY LINES, NOT HADDAD--AND MADE CLEAR THAT WE LOOKED TO THE ISRAELIS TO REIN THEM IN. HE AGAIN SAID: "DON'T WORRY; EVERYTHING IS NOW UNDER CONTROL. LET'S SEE HOW THE NEXT 48 HOURS GO."

5. CLEARLY UPSET AND BITTER ABOUT THE CABINET DEBATE WHICH HAD JUST ENDED, WEIZMAN WAS NOT IN A MOOD FOR EXTENSIVE DIS-
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CUSSION. BUT HIS WORDS WERE CLEAR ENOUGH. AND TODAY'S UNIFIL REPORTS VIA NEWLIN REMAIN MILDLY ENCOURAGING. I RETAIN THE HOPE THAT ERSKINE AND COMPANY CAN GRADUALLY GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA ON THE GROUND. THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO DO THAT IS TO EXPELL MORE PALESTINIAN INFILTRATORS. THE GOI HAS NEWS TODAY THAT A FATAH GROUP OF ABOUT 30 HAD BEEN APPREHENDED BY UNIFIL WITH SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF WEAPONS. IF SO, SOME PUBLICITY FOR THEIR EXPULSION FROM THE UNIFIL ZONE WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL HERE.

LEWIS

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NNN

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